

It is exceedingly discouraging to see how media consolidation is adversely effecting communities and now even threatens the national election.

In the greater community of Utica NY, where I reside, channel WUTR (a Clear Channel station) has eliminated local news entirely, has eliminated its entire news staff, and apparently thinks by providing news from a city (Syracuse NY) fifty miles away that it is fulfilling its obligation to serve the public interest. It is doing no such thing. In fact, it is using public airwaves to make money with advertising while depriving our community of a broader range of news and opinions.

Now Sinclair Broadcasting is further demonstrating the dangers of media consolidation with its decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election. Sinclair and Clear Channel use the public airwaves free of charge. By law they are obligated to serve the public interest. Large companies such as these control the airwaves are demonstrating time and again their concern for the bottom line far out-weigh their regard for the needs of the communities they are entrusted to serve and democracy in general. It may be good for their bottom line to have centralized news sources but it does our communities great harm when real local people and substantial news that matters are sacrificed.

Sinclair's and Clear Channel's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.